

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1852

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 3514

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CM, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH-CAMEROON NEGOTIATIONS FOR REVISING COOPERATION
ACCORDS

REF: YAOUNDE 3411

1. SUMMARY: FIRST PHASE OF FRENCH-CAMEROON NEGOTIATIONS
WHICH STARTED IN PARIS IN SEPTEMBER NOW COMPLETED. FINAL
PHASE WILL GET UNDERWAY IN YAOUNDE IN SECOND HALF OF NOVEMBER.
PROSPECTS FOR AGREEMENT ARE ENCOURAGING.

2. FONMIN EFON RETURNED YAOUNDE EVENING OCTOBER 23 FROM
PARIS WHERE HE HAS BEEN PRESIDING CAMEROONIAN DELEGATION IN
NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE ON REVISION OF COOPERATION AGREEMENTS.
LOCAL MEDIA TODAY CARRIED JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED OCTOBER 22
IN PARIS ANNOUNCING THAT FIRST PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS HAD COME
TO END AND THAT FINAL PHASE WILL GET UNDERWAY IN YAOUNDE IN SECOND
HALF OF NOVEMBER. COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT DISCUSSIONS WHICH
MARKED BY FRANKNESS AND CORDIALITY HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS.

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR DUPUY PROFESSES TO HAVE NO REPORT
ON STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS AS OF TERMINATION OF FIRST PHASE. HE
ASSUMES COOPERATION MINISTER DENIAU WILL COME TO YAOUNDE TO
OPEN FINAL PHASE BUT DOUBTS THAT HE WILL REMAIN THROUGHOUT
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NEGOTIATIONS.

4. FRENCH AID MISSION CHIEF DECAMPS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PARIS NEGOTIATIONS ON CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND STATUS OF PERSONNEL AGREEMENTS AT EXPERT LEVEL, RETURNED YAOUNDE PREVIOUS WEEK. HE TOLD US THAT AT TIME HIS DEPARTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON THESE THREE AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN TERMINATED AT EXPERTS LEVEL WITH ONLY A FEW ISSUES REMAINING TO BE SETTLED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. ALTHOUGH CAMEROONIAN DEMANDS WERE AT TIMES ON EXTREME SIDE, DECAMP SAID CAMEROONIANS SEEMED READY TO ACCEPT REALITIES ON ISSUES WHERE FRENCH COULD DEMONSTRATE THEY WERE UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE. LIKEWISE THEY WERE INTRANSIGENT ON OTHER ISSUES INVOLVING THEIR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS, SUCH AS REQUIREMENT THAT IMPORTS BY FRENCH EXPERTS BE SUBJECT TO CUSTOMS DUTIES. ON THE WHOLE HE FELT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE MOVING ALONG QUITE SATISFACTORILY.

5. DECAMP WAS STRUCK BY EMPHASIS PLACED BY CAMEROON DELEGATION ON RESOLVING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES AT EXPERTS LEVEL AND IN REDUCING TO MINIMUM ISSUES WHICH HAD TO BE REFERRED TO MINISTERS DENIAU AND EFON WHO HELD PERIODIC TETE-A-TETE MEETINGS. HE SAW EDWARD KOULLA, MINISTRY OF FINANCE BUDGET DIRECTOR AND ONE OF CAMEROON'S LEADING YOUNG ECONOMIC EXPERTS, AS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND CAMEROONIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM. HE BELIEVED GURC EMPHASIS ON AGREEMENT AT EXPERT LEVEL REFLECTED DESIRE TO HAVE RESTIVE ELEMENTS SUCH AS KOULLA IDENTIFIED WITH AND BEARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR AGREEMENTS THAT ARE ULTIMATELY REACHED.

6. COMMENT: IN LIGHT RUMBLINGS OF DISSATISFACTION IN UNIVERSITY AND YOUNG ELITE CIRCLES OVER PRIVILEGED POSITION OF FRENCH AND FRENCH INTERESTS IN CAMEROON, GURC'S POLICY OF MAKING YOUNG EXPERTS BEAR LARGE SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ULTIMATE AGREEMENTS IS AN ASTUTE ONE. GURC HAS BEEN MOST UNCOMMUNICATIVE ON DETAILS OF NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH WE SUSPECT ARE KNOWN TO ONLY A FEW. LOCAL MEDIA TREATMENT HAS BEEN MINIMAL, LIMITED LARGELY TO REFLECTION ON FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND DESIRE OF BOTH SIDES TO ARRIVE AT EARLY AGREEMENT.
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